R E P O R T R E S U M E S

ED 013 659 JC 670 924

RESEARCH STUDIES OF THE JUNIOR COLLEGE DROPOUT.

BY- ROUECHE, JOHN E.
CALIFORNIA UNIV., LOS ANGELES

AMERICAN ASSN. OF JUNIOR COLLEGES, WASHINGTON,D.C.
PUB DATE OCT 67
EDRS PRICE MF-$0.25 HC-$0.24 6P.

DESCRIPTORS- *JUNIOR COLLEGES, *RESEARCH REVIEWS (PUBLICATIONS), CLEARINGHOUSES, *DROPOUT RESEARCH, DROPOUT CHARACTERISTICS, *DROPOUT PREVENTION,

A REVIEW OF 16 INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH REPORTS IN THE CLEARINGHOUSE FOR JUNIOR COLLEGE INFORMATION INDICATES THE TYPE OF EFFORTS BEING MADE BY JUNIOR COLLEGES TO REDUCE THEIR NUMBERS OF DROPOUTS. QUESTIONNAIRE STUDIES, ANALYSIS OF STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS, AND ADJUSTMENT OF INSTITUTIONAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES ARE TYPICAL PRACTICES. INSTITUTIONAL REPORTS INDICATE THAT ALTHOUGH THERE IS LITTLE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ATTRITION AND ABILITY AS SHOWN BY GRADE RECORDS OR COLLEGE ENTRANCE EXAMINATIONS, A RELATIONSHIP APPEARS TO EXIST BETWEEN DROPOUT RATES AND CERTAIN NONINTELLECTIVE FACTORS. THE AUTHOR RECOMMENDS FURTHER RESEARCH INTO SUCH FACTORS, THE REASONS FOR DROPOUTS, AND THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF STUDENTS WHO LEAVE JUNIOR COLLEGES BEFORE COMPLETION OF THEIR PROGRAMS. (WO)

ERIC

EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH INFORMATION CENTER ERIC

UCLA

CLEARINGHOUSE FOR JUNIOR COLLEGE INFORMATION

Volume 2, No. 7

JUNIOR COLLEGE RESEARCH REVIEW

October, 1967

A periodical review of research reports received and processed at the Clearinghouse for Junior College Information

Published by the American Association of Junior Colleges

ED013659

RESEARCH STUDIES OF THE JUNIOR COLLEGE DROPOUT

This issue of *Junior College Research Review* is devoted to research on students who drop out or withdraw from junior colleges before completing programs in which they were enrolled. Documents reviewed here were selected from materials received and processed at the Clearinghouse for Junior College Information. The Clearinghouse collects and disseminates research findings relevant to junior college operations. Other Clearinghouses operating in association with the United States Office of Education's ERIC project process research documents in different subject areas.

Sources and Methodology: Sixteen research reports relating to junior college dropouts are reviewed in this issue. All but one of these documents were produced as junior college institutional research studies. The methodological approach in most of these studies involved a survey of dropouts by means of a questionnaire.

Nine of the reports surveyed dropouts and determined reasons for student withdrawal from college. These reports did not make recommendations for program modifications based on specific findings. The remaining seven documents not only determined reasons for student attrition, but actually made specific recommendations for curricular and/or instructional modifications. In short, these research projects were designed and conducted for the purpose of reducing the dropout rate.

Review: Mira Costa College designed a research project so that "steps can be taken to provide methods for reducing the number of dropouts" (JC 670-408). This study attempted to determine the characteristics of those students who withdrew from Mira Costa College and to ascertain their reasons for withdrawing. A structured questionnaire was mailed to all students who dropped out during the fall semesters of 1963, 1964, and 1965. In addition, college records were surveyed to discern information regarding parental occupation and educational background.

This follow-up study revealed that the dropout rate was directly related to the unrealistic image of college life held by entering students. When these dropouts were compared with full-time freshmen on the American College Test composite, it was found that 50 percent of the dropouts were capable of succeeding in college in terms of ability, grades, and general achievement level. As a result of the study, Mira Costa College planned to increase emphasis on counseling so that each incoming student would be made aware of the relationship between his college goals and his aptitudes, interests, and prior high school and/or college record.

In its survey of students who withdrew during the spring semester of the 1965-66 school year, Orange Coast College found the college career of the withdrawing student terminated principally because of the following reasons: (1) finances, (2) health, (3) personal problems, and (4) academic deficiencies (JC 670-388). At Orange Coast, 94 percent of the students who terminated their college careers by dropping out indicated that they were planning to return to college. Of this figure, 58 percent planned to return to junior college.

Shasta College conducted a dropout survey for the purpose of determining what guidance practices, if any, should be modified or instituted to reduce the dropout rate (JC 670-005). The students participating in the Shasta study did not reveal any particular characteristic which would identify them as being different from other students attending the college. No evidence was brought to light which would support the view that probationary status and/or overall grade-point average have any significant influence on the dropout rate. No accurate generalization could be made from this study to indicate why students drop out of the college, but in most instances the reasons given by the respondents were those over which the college has little control. Recommendations of modifications needed in the guidance program concluded the report.

Riverside City College conducted an experiment to determine the effect of three different "drop policies" on the retention of students (JC 660-490). During the 1962-63 school year, the period during which all courses could be dropped without penalty (i.e., course would not appear on permanent record) was six weeks from the beginning of the semester. Courses dropped after the sixth week were assigned WS, WD, or WF grades by the instructors, depending upon the student's progress in the individual course up to the time of withdrawal.

For the 1963-64 school year the six-week drop period was retained, but students who dropped individual courses after the sixth week were normally given F grades in that course. Under certain circumstances, instructors were permitted to assign WS, WD, or WF grades.

During the 1964-65 school year some of the courses had a three-week drop period while others had an eight-week drop period. Dropping a class

JC 670924

after either deadline would result in a WF grade for the course except under special circumstances.

The study did not consider the merits of each plan except in terms of the effect on student drop-out rates. Retention of students was best under the six-week drop period that did not penalize students (mandatory F or WF grade) for dropping courses or being dropped by the instructor after the drop period. The study recommended that Riverside City College adopt the 1962-63 drop policy as the college's official statement regarding withdrawals, for the following reasons:

1. There was a higher percent retention of students who completed the semester.
2. There were fewer W and F grades given in 1962-63 than in the other two years.
3. There were fewer "No Penalty Drops" during 1962-63 than in the other two years.

South Georgia College is another institution which, as a result of research findings, developed a program to reduce student attrition (JC 670-432). In 1963, the college established a policy that permitted students with marginal academic potential, as measured by their Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) scores and/or high school averages (HSA's), to attend summer school on a trial basis. These on-trial students who could meet certain minimum grade requirements in summer school thus became eligible to enter classes in the fall quarter as regular students. Follow-up studies of the students who did well enough in the summer-on-trial program to be admitted to regular classes indicated, however, that only a small proportion persisted through even their freshman year. Much time, effort, and money were spent on students who seldom succeeded in regular college classes.

Using *The College Inventory of Academic Adjustment* (available from Consulting Psychologists Press, Inc., 577 College Avenue, Palo Alto, Calif.), a study was conducted to determine whether there were significant *nonintellective* differences between on-trial students who did well enough in their summer programs to be admitted to the regular fall classes and who persisted through the freshman year, as compared to the on-trial students who did well enough in their programs to be admitted to regular classes but who did *not* persist through the freshman year. The findings of that investigation indicated that, although there were no significant differences between the persisters and the others on the usual intellective predictors of academic performance (e.g., HSA, SAT), there were relevant nonintellective differences. More important, those differences appeared very early in the students' college careers.

The study recommended that in the future *The College Inventory of Academic Adjustment* be given very early in the fall quarter to students who succeed in summer-on-trial programs. This recommendation would enable student personnel workers at South Georgia College to identify probable dropouts and offer them counseling before the students withdrew from the college. The study suggested that such a procedure would lessen the high rate of attrition which had been characteristic of summer-on-trial students in their freshman year.

That vocational courses serve as "dumping grounds" for students who cannot hope to pursue a "college" curriculum is a commonly held opinion which may be based on fact according to practices in some institutions. However, although the evidence concerning characteristics of vocational students is sketchy, a recent investigation at the School of Education, University of California, Berkeley (JC 660-271), found that students enrolled in vocational programs are *not* simply individuals who have been unsuccessful in other courses or students who have been judged unable to complete an academic course of study. In brief, vocational students are typically not "dropouts" of more sophisticated curricula. They are different from those junior college students who enroll in nonvocational programs. The findings of this study have broad implications for junior college counseling programs.

Summary: Thornton indicates that data from issues of the *Junior College Directory* show that over 50 percent of freshmen students leave at the end of the first year in college. While some of these students transfer to other colleges at the end of one or two semesters, it is generally known that as many as 10 percent drop out between fall registration and Christmas vacation (James W. Thornton, Jr., *The Community Junior College*, 2nd Ed., John Wiley & Sons, pp. 155-156).

Although most community junior colleges are concerned about the high proportion of entering students who withdraw without completing their objectives, relatively few studies are reported that relate to the *reasons* for dropouts or withdrawals or that suggest procedures by means of which attrition rates may be reduced.

From the research reviewed here, the following may be concluded:

1. Academic ability scores (HSA's and SAT scores) appear to be of no value in predicting junior college dropouts.
2. There are certain nonintellective differences between students who persist and those who drop out. These differences can be used to identify potential dropouts and should be given special consideration by student personnel workers.

While most of the studies focus attention on reasons for student attrition, little research has been implemented that evaluates the accomplishments of students who leave the junior college prior to earning a degree or completing a program of instruction. This group, representing the overwhelming majority of junior college students, has not yet been the subject of major junior college institutional research efforts.

John E. Roueche

BIBLIOGRAPHY

JC 660-160
A Follow-up Study of Students Withdrawing from Santa Monica City College During the Spring Semester — February-June, 1965, by Donald F. Blemker. Santa Monica City College, Santa Monica, Calif. October, 1965, 13 p.

JC 660-252
A Study of Students Who Reduced Their Class Load at Macomb County Community College During Fall Semester of 1965, by Lyle R. Robertson. Macomb County Community College, Warren, Mich. April, 1966. 14 p.

JC 660-266
Withdrawal Survey Data for Fall Semester, 1963. Orange Coast Junior College District, Costa Mesa, Calif. March, 1965. 27 p.

JC 660-267
Withdrawal Survey Data for Spring Semester, 1964. Orange Coast Junior College District, Costa Mesa, Calif. March, 1965. 28 p.

JC 660-269
Withdrawal Survey Data for Fall Semester, 1964. Orange Coast Junior College District, Costa Mesa, Calif. June, 1965. 26 p.

JC 660-270
Withdrawal Survey Data for Spring Semester, 1965. Orange Coast Junior College District, Costa Mesa, Calif. June, 1965. 24 p.

JC 660-271
Characteristics of Junior College Students in Occupationally Oriented Curricula, by Lawrence H. Stewart. School of Education, University of California, Berkeley, Calif. March, 1966. 49 p.

JC 660-328
Withdrawals: Some Etiological Factors and Antidotes, by Marie M. Roberts. Compton College, Compton, Calif. July, 1966. 31 p.

JC 660-490
Retention of Students over a Three-Year Period under Three Different Drop Policies, by Evan Vail. Riverside City College, Riverside, Calif. Spring, 1966. 8 p.

JC 670-005
Dropout Study, by Robert C. Nichols and George R. Safford. Shasta College, Redding, Calif. June, 1966. 31 p.

JC 670-020
Dropout Rates (Modesto Multi-Occupational Project). Modesto Junior College, Modesto, Calif. November, 1965. 9 p.

JC 670-069
Counseling Techniques with Potential Drop-out Students in Junior College, by William E. Kunhart and George Raleder. *Journal of Counseling Psychology,* 11: 190-191, 1964. 5 p.

JC 670-229
Guided Studies Program, Basic Educational Planning, by Preston Graham. El Centro College, Dallas, Tex. 1966. 43 p.

JC 670-338
Withdrawal Survey Data for Spring Semester, 1966, by Frank O. Hopkins. Orange Coast Junior College District, Costa Mesa, Calif. August, 1966. 30 p.

JC 670-408
Student Personnel Studies. Mira Costa College, Oceanside, Calif. 1966. 95 p.

JC 670-432
Academic Adjustment and the Persistence of Students with Marginal Academic Potential through Their Freshman Year in College, by Charles J. Gelso. South Georgia College, Douglas, Ga. June, 1966. 10 p.

Abstracts of documents processed in the ERIC system may be found in *Research in Education,* a publication of the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare. *Research in Education* may be ordered from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402. (Single copy, $1.00; annual subscription of 12 issues, $11.00.)

CLEARINGHOUSE FOR JUNIOR COLLEGE INFORMATION

Arthur M. Cohen, Director

John E. Roueche, Associate Director

Lorraine Mathies, Associate Director

Advisory Board

A. ROBERT DE HART
Chairman, Committee on Research & Development
California Junior College Association

EDMUND J. GLEAZER
Executive Director
American Association of Junior Colleges

ROBERT M. HAYES
Professor, School of Library Service, UCLA
Director, Institute of Library Research

B. LAMAR JOHNSON
Professor of Higher Education, UCLA

THOMAS B. MERSON
Dean of Instruction
Bakersfield Junior College

C. ROBERT PACE
Professor of Higher Education, UCLA

ROBERT VOSPER
University Librarian, UCLA

JAMES L. WATTENBARGER
Assistant Superintendent
Florida State Department of Education

The Clearinghouse operates under contract with the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Office of Education.

GPO 974-744

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

UNIVERSITY OF CALIF.
LOS ANGELES

NOV 5 1967

CLEARINGHOUSE FOR
JUNIOR COLLEGE
INFORMATION

JUNIOR COLLEGE RESEARCH REVIEW
Arthur M. Cohen, Editor
Clearinghouse for Junior College Information
Room 96, Powell Library
University of California
405 Hilgard Avenue
Los Angeles, California 90024

NON-PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
LOS ANGELES, CALIF.
PERMIT NO. 12378